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COOPERATION OF HUNGARIAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES ON
THE FIELD OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION SERVICES AND THE SPECIAL
FEATURES OF THE VESZPRÉM UNIVERSITY LIBRARY'S ACTIVITY

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In his discussion my Hungarian colleague, Mr. J. Zsidai dealt with the cooperation of libraries from a theoretical point of view. I want to add a few numerical data to this subject.

I registered the interaction of the Veszprém University Library and other special libraries, especially that of the TU Budapest and TU Miskolc. Besides the two TU libraries in Hungary we are in permanent contact with about one hundred special libraries, interested in our services: computerised SDI, interlibrary loan and reprography services, as well as our translation service.

The table below shows the figures relating to the main information services supplied to each other bilaterally.

Table: Interlibrary Loan and Reprography Services Supplied between the Veszprém University Library and the Other Two Hungarian Technological University Libraries

Veszprém supplied to	Budapest	Miskolc	Others	Altogether :
originals	1	6	45	52
/in per cent/	1.9	11.6	86.6	100
reprographies	32	152	2558	2742
/in per cent/	1.17	5.54	93.29	100

Veszprém received from				
originals	16	5	521	542
/in per cent/	2.95	0.92	96.13	100
reprographies	426	51	2428	2905
/in per cent/	14.66	1.76	83.58	100

First of all it can be seen that neither the bibliographical services, nor the translations are mentioned. I must state that there is no need for co-operation in translation services. The TU Miskolc Library runs a translation office staffed with a qualified personnel similarly to that of the TU Veszprém Library. Both are able to fulfill not only the needs of their own universities, but the greatest part of their capacities, up to 90 % serves outdoor users in the region. The TU Budapest Library has no translation office of its own but has sufficient access to the various translatory services available in the capital.

Dealing with bibliographical services, I have to mention that automated, computerised SDI services are available only in Miskolc and Veszprém. The TU Budapest has a fairly broad profile, less defined than those of the other two, so establishing a similar SDI service would require much more efforts, then either at Miskolc or Veszprém.

The TU Veszprém and its library is engaged only in chemistry proper; not even in all aspects of it. Biochemistry, e.g. and related subdivisions are not cultivated. But no branch of chemistry can do without extensive use of its special literature, so the best conditions have been insured to establish a computerised SDI service. The service is running since 1971 on the basis of CACON tapes. The TU Veszprém itself uses 60 of the total 170 profiles, TU Budapest subscribes to 5 and Miskolc to 1 of them.

Shortly after Veszprém, the Library of the TU Miskolc organized the next computerised SDI service in Hungary based on METADEX tapes. Since metallurgical topics do not belong to the research and educational profile of the Veszprém University, we do not use the METADEX services.

Cooperation between the institutes mentioned is most intense in loan, and especially in reprography services. The table shows that lending of original documents is an information service of minor significance. This statement is especially valid for Veszprém. We are lending only books, but no original journals. Therefore, our reprography service produces relatively high figures with respect to our stock of only 20.000 bound volumes and somewhat less than 1.000 current primary journals.

Looking at the share in the information services of the Veszprém University Library of the TU Budapest and Miskolc it can be seen that Budapest has a very low share in both loans and reprographies. Taking into account that column "Others" covers 72 receiving libraries and 95 of those supplying services to Veszprém, it means that about 38 reprographies in average have been supplied to 72 of our outdoor clients in 1978. The share of Budapest in our services does not exceed the average, but the share of Miskolc is about 4 times the average in reprography and 8 times in loan services.

The other side of the cooperation looks as follows: we required and received from 95 libraires 542 original documents and 2.905 reprographies. This reduces in average to 5.7 originals and 30.6 reprographies in 1978. In this respect Miskolc is on average level and Budapest exceeds it 3 times in lending originals and 14 times in reprography services. I want note here that there are also IATUL member libraires from abroad in the "others" column. They provide a most valuable aid to us. We rely quite regularly on the services of Delft, Trondheim, Helsinki, Hannover, Laughton, Dortmund, and so on. I would like to express here our grateful acknowledgement of their quick and reliable services.

Now what can be said about the special features of the information services of the Veszprém University Library? Unlike most public libraries in Hungary and the socialist countries, our library operates on an almost commercial basis. We bill our outdoor clients, and the returns cover not only the direct costs of the services, but also the taxes, and development funds. A fraction of this income is used to provide to premium to our librarians.

ians, performing the tasks.

In my opinion the librarians have to be involved materially as well in the services. When bilateral cooperations are not in balance, more explicitly, when one library makes use of the services of another library and is not able to return them on a similar level, it should pay for the differences. Without due reimbursement no reliable service exists. - If a library, or individuals of its staff work better than others engaged in a similar job, everybody wants to make use of his/her services. So the cooperative librarian will work much more for the same wages than the lazy one, and the diligent gets punished instead of being honoured. Therefore a service is suggested in which the employee carrying out excellent work is honoured.

There is apparently a contradiction here. I want to say that the premium paid to the librarians, performing the outdoor services does not compensate their efforts. It is really only an acknowledgement of their cooperation and reliability. The premium in a year paid to most librarians in Veszprém amounts in average to one month's salary.

Other special features to be mentioned are as follows: we are oriented to information services: bibliography, reprography and lending, as well as translations but no documentation, no editorial and/or publishing activity, and so on. Despite the very simple construction of our organization we are able to fulfill the fundamental needs of our users within and without the University.

I am convinced that we as relative small special libraries - each concentrating on a well defined subject - are able to cover the scientific information needs of a small country, like Hungary only if we co-ordinate thoroughly our services and other activities.

DISCUSSION

Mr. C.G. Wood: I was interested to hear about the dispensation of personal rewards for extra work involved in the operation of a cooperative scheme.

Mr. P. Durey: This idea of personal reward may be an unfamiliar concept for British librarians who are employed on scales with regular annual increments but would not be unfamiliar to American librarians who are accustomed to receiving increases in salary as merit awards.

Dr. D. Shaw: Have you any comment to make on the approach of the CISTI to the provision of information services? I believe that the recently retired Director used to insist that services to other institutions were paid for on a commercial basis. Those which could not be sold were withdrawn.

Kováts: Yes, I approve of that approach. Furthermore, I think that all library and information services should be contracted out.

Mrs. M. Slajpah: It is recognized in Yugoslavia that the central university library has a duty to help the special libraries in their work. This activity is supported by a financial contribution from the user, who pays the difference between the funding from the research community of the Republic towards documentation development work, and the total cost.

CO-OPERATION IN THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO READERS IN CONURBATIONS

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The development of higher educational institutions in Great Britain in recent years has slowed down. Financial restrictions have meant that new projects are few and that some which had been started have been terminated before they could be completed as originally intended. Furthermore student numbers are, it is predicted, likely to fall. We have reached what it is fashionable to call a period of consolidation and it is therefore not without interest to look at the library consequences of the growth of the last few years. This is of particular importance in large urban areas for there higher educational institutions frequently cluster with marked consequences for the library services they provide.

It could be argued that the main aim of co-operation between libraries should be to give greater satisfaction to readers. No doubt other aims could be advocated and one which appeals strongly to those concerned with the financing of libraries is the possible financial economies which may result. But many practising librarians would agree, if only in private, with the statement of one convinced advocate of co-operation in a conurbation that "co-operation has failed if it saves money."¹

Whatever the aims, however, it is clear that in many large urban areas in Great Britain there are a number of libraries concerned wholly or in part with services to higher education yet differing in age, adequacy, relations with their parent institutions and financial support. Co-operation of some sort between such libraries seems an obvious way forward.

The users of such libraries may owe their primary allegiance to one or more of the institutions providing them; they nevertheless tend to move between libraries as the need arises, and according to patterns often little known to librarians or academic staffs. Certain broad rules seem to apply to this ill-defined process and in general students at undergraduate level, expect provision to be made by their own parent institutions for their needs, although how often that happens in practice or whether such students use the provision made for them in the intended way is debatable. For the purposes of teaching, research and post-graduate study of various types, however, the libraries of one urban area, not far apart if one measures distance on a map with a ruler, may be seen by users as forming in some vague way a large collection of library material stored for a variety of little understood reasons at various points in the area. So as the number of institutions of higher education in Great Britain has grown and as groups of institutions, not always clearly distinguishable one from another in their aims, have appeared in large urban areas, attention has naturally turned to the possibility of co-operation. While the satisfaction of readers has figured largely in such thinking, particularly from the library side, the financial aspects mentioned above have undoubtedly encouraged such projects as that recently sponsored by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals. That body felt that two specimen groups of university libraries, which might in some way be expected to have co-operative arrangements,

should be examined. The reception given to the proposals may lead one to think that, while co-operation in a general sense is felt to be of benefit, the precise benefits to be expected from it are still uncertain and still less certain are the resources of the urban area from which such benefits might flow. To consider university libraries only is to ignore not merely non-university institutions of higher education but also major public libraries.

To take first the accumulation of library stock, it may seem at first glance that there would be considerable scope for co-operation in ensuring that material of importance was provided in the area and that unnecessary duplication was avoided. Yet a detailed study of library co-operation in Sheffield found that there was "a relatively low degree of overlap".² In the libraries of the University of London scattered over a considerable area, a similar conclusion was reached and it was stated that they "formed one of the largest library systems in the country. If overlap is low here, then what are the chances of high overlap within smaller library systems?"³ These conclusions if generally true seem to demonstrate that while there may be deficiencies in the area's stock the resources released by cutting out unnecessary duplication of acquisitions may well be small.

Supposing the stocks of the group of libraries to be reasonably good one may probably turn to the records kept of them and of how these records and other services can best be communicated to users. There always seems to be a belief that a union catalogue of the holdings of the libraries in a conurbation is of value in itself. If such a record is constructed, however, it can only serve a useful purpose locally if a local inter-lending system is based upon it, or if readers move from one library in the neighbourhood to another because of information contained in the catalogue. It may of course serve as a guide to book selection, but the evidence mentioned above seems to show that a union catalogue would not be of great assistance. There are of course many interesting developments in the field of co-operative cataloguing in Great Britain, in addition to the work of the British Library. It is noticeable, however, that even if as in Birmingham the plan originated to serve a group of like-minded libraries in a conurbation, it has grown to serve libraries scattered all over the country without distinction of type.

Perhaps more can be said for co-operative attempts to publicise existing services than for the construction of co-operative records. It is no doubt simple in theory to prepare a document setting out what a reader may expect from different libraries in a neighbourhood but it is difficult to bring it off successfully when different philosophies of librarianship, different financial capabilities and different capacities of staff are involved. What counts to the reader is how he finds and how readily he can gain access to what he needs in another library in the conurbation which he does not normally visit. This often seems to be less a question of publicity statements and more one of flexibility and diligence in looking after readers in general.

One may also look at the advantages to readers derived from co-operation in unifying and improving administrative procedures and fostering contacts between library staffs who might not otherwise consult together. It has been hoped by some advocates of local co-operation that from such links, and the use of co-ordinated stocks and co-operative catalogues other joint activities might arise with a process of continuous consultation between the libraries who direct all of the operations.

There are obvious difficulties in this. There are great differences between institutions and by extension between their libraries, even if they all nominally work in the field of higher education. In any case not all libraries

of interest to higher education are provided primarily for that purpose, notably the large urban public libraries. In Leeds some years ago, for example, it was found that almost all of the university students who did not use the university library went to the public library.⁴ Looking in fact at the variety of libraries found in almost any of the conurbations one may well be surprised at the degree of co-operation that exists, considering the very different financial backgrounds, the degrees of openness to the reader, and concepts of service. The conurbation of Greater Manchester, in which the University of Salford functions, has for example two universities, a polytechnic, a major public library and other smaller ones, and an assortment of other colleges of higher education. Much the same could be said, to take examples at random, of Birmingham Newcastle or Sheffield.

Even if one accepts that diversity of institutions and of libraries works against the theoretically desirable co-operation there are other factors of importance. For example, geography has an effect; not so much the distance on a map, but the distance between libraries by public transport or when taking account of the one-way streets and the availability (and cost) of car parking. Also important is the fact that neighbouring academic institutions may in some fields be in competition and that as far as co-operation between libraries implies rationalisation provision and the avoidance of overlaps (if in spite of the evidence such things exist to any serious extent) there are still great difficulties when parent institutions persist in unco-ordinated activities. Consideration of library co-operation in higher education without looking at the co-operation of parent institutions may not be a very fruitful line of investigation.

At a time when Great Britain has elected to power a government concerned to make economies in public spending the financial implications of co-operation are important. The view that libraries would be cheaper if they co-operated persists and urban areas of higher education are likely backgrounds to such a belief. Yet, as already mentioned, advocates of co-operation do not think it will reduce costs and from the United States it has been said that there is little evidence that co-operative efforts "have significantly improved services to clients and virtually none that they have reduced costs."⁵ An interesting product, however, is the improvement of readers' services in an individual library by, if one may so put it, the enhancement of its individuality, possibly by co-operation on a basis other than local. A case is the use in the library of the University of Salford of the services provided by the Birmingham Libraries Co-operative Mechanisation Project which started in a conurbation with a fairly typical group of two universities, a polytechnic and a large public library. The systems developed have found favour with libraries scattered over a wide area of Great Britain and have produced the result that in the Manchester area Manchester Polytechnic and the University of Salford are better able to discuss some common problems together than with other libraries in the area because each use the same system to improve readers' services and do not object to its centre lying a considerable distance away.

But surely the implication here is that anything done locally to improve resources or records may be on too small a scale to make much difference. As Mason has it "so we extend interaction of collections and services, so we exchange borrowing privileges: when it is all added up we have extended our potential only a fraction: I do not decry its effects and we would not give them up but we are building anthills when we need mountains".⁶ That was said some years ago and on United States problems. In a smaller country this may now look a little different.

Advocates of close co-operation between libraries serving higher education in conurbations may be at fault not only in supposing that important economies

can be made by the libraries without much change in the parent institutions, but also in ignoring the extent to which local resources are only part of the material available to local users. They may be aware of the British Library and its many services, but are perhaps less well informed on the growing number of co-operatives covering a region or possibly as in the case of the Birmingham scheme of even wider areas. The staple of much discussion of local co-operation, such as inter-library lending, the production of union lists and so on tends to lose its importance. I recall at least two union lists produced in my own conurbation which seemed mainly to be of interest to librarians and I do not think that they ever exercised much influence on the selection or retention of journals in the fields with which they dealt.

One may guess that the more information is used by libraries in the form of mechanised systems the less importance the possession of documents in a small geographical area will have. One may debate the desirability of this development, but now as we hover on the edge of the Teletext era we must consider that the book stock in the library down the road may be of somewhat less importance to us.

If of course the future lies with big systems there will be dangers of which many advocates of local and regional co-operation are well aware. The larger the organisation the less chance a user has of influencing it and the greater the possibility of a complex system of control with perhaps a built-in tendency to fossilization. Even in the small local schemes there is always a danger from committees which may see various ill-defined sorts of co-operation as absorbing tasks in themselves. But, as was said earlier in this paper satisfaction of readers is our business and we are judged by the services available in our libraries. This may make for willingness to change for "librarians who assign top priority to service will exhibit behavioral patterns which are considerably different from those who assign highest priority to the maintenance of internal procedures and records".⁷ This does not necessitate uniformity or the bringing of a group of libraries into one system.

Humble aims are likely to be useful and, let us admit it, quite sufficiently time consuming. Experience in the conurbation in which the University of Salford lies shows that to frame a statement for one institution on the availability of services in another can be quite a complex business. But working on this level and leaving aside the more grandiose schemes there is a real chance of improving things for the reader about whose movements between our libraries we often know so little. Schemes covering larger areas can relieve us of some of our troubles and new forms of information storage and transmission perhaps take care of others. Then we can hope to know, as one exponent of conurbation co-operation has put it, that "co-operation is a means of self-expression".¹

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DISCUSSION

Mr. C.G. Wood: I operate my library functions within a conurbation. As soon as, for example, our library instruction programmes direct our students to the facilities of the larger public libraries in the U.K., am I not already committed to cooperation? Moreover, as I cannot possibly be involved in the finances of the other institution, the limits of cooperation are proscribed - beyond remedy.

Bubb: I think we are moving rapidly towards a situation where the big public or other library institutions will become less receptive to sharing loads so that all too soon we may be faced with this additional break in cooperation.

Prof. A.J. Evans: The other area considered by the University Grants Committee was that of Leicester, Loughborough and Nottingham. We had a useful although abortive discussion in that we agreed that there was little scope for useful (i.e. economic) cooperation without the involvement of the academic side and they were not represented at the meeting although the point was made beforehand.

Mr. L. Gärdvall: Do you think cooperation would go better with direct funding from the government, instead of libraries receiving financial support from their universities?

Bubb: No. I do not think that the central bureaucracy could do the job of finding ways of cooperation. This requires good will and personal initiative.

Mr. S. Westberg: Experience in Sweden of the problems of academic libraries getting money which has been specially allocated by central authorities does not necessarily show that this would be better than being dependent on their respective universities.

Mrs. E. Törnudd: You painted a rather sinister picture of the attitudes of academics towards the provision of services to extramural clients. My impression from the Helsinki University of Technology is a "nobless oblige" attitude. Do you not also experience this?

Bubb: Yes, but individual interests come first. If a library renders good service to the university, it tends to concentrate on intramural users.